

Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal Project
Draft Notes
Scoping Meeting
September 19, 2002; 9:00 a.m.
Latino Family Services Center

Background: This is a formal scoping meeting for the DIFT Project.

Attendance: See attachment.

Discussion:

The purpose of the meeting was to describe the project and its potential impacts and to solicit from those agencies contacted, and others who attended, responses to the purpose and need for the project, the project alternatives, and potential impacts. Resource agencies were invited, as were other organizations that might potentially have involvement with the project. Notification also was extended to those who have indicated an interest in the project, and/or are considered community leaders.

Ari Adler of MDOT began the meeting by asking those present to introduce themselves. Mr. Adler then turned the meeting over to Don Cameron of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) who used a PowerPoint presentation to discuss the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process. A hard copy of Don Cameron's PowerPoint presentation was distributed. In his remarks, he covered NEPA's objectives and the role of NEPA as an "umbrella" for a variety of federal laws, and regulations. He then discussed the EIS process: the study approach, notice of intent, purpose and need, scoping, draft EIS, public hearing, final EIS, and the Record of Decision (ROD). He noted that the purpose of today's meeting was scoping, which is designed to define a study area, develop a list of stakeholders, inventory and map known resources, identify socioeconomic and environmental constraints, identify preliminary alternatives, and initiate the public involvement and agency coordination process. Don then explained how an EIS is prepared and its components; how that leads to a public hearing; and, how the public hearing comments are addressed in the process of preparing the final EIS. The process is concluded with a Record of Decision, which is a written record explaining why the lead agency, in this case the Federal Highway Administration, has taken a particular course of action.

Ari Adler then asked Joe Corradino to explain the project purpose and need, a document which was distributed by mail to all resource agencies in advance of the September 19 meeting. Joe Corradino explained that the presence of the Livernois-Junction Yard area in Southwest Detroit could allow the consolidation there of a number of intermodal terminals in the region, several of which are experiencing capacity problems at their current locations. Consolidation at a single location is expected to improve the economic position of Southeast Michigan. Joe Corradino then played a

videotape that explained the project. After the presentation, Ari Adler asked that those present offer their comments. These are presented below along with MDOT's response, where appropriate.

Comment: Frank Katarzis of The City of Dearborn indicated the City has no comments at the present time.

Comment: Alex Sanchez of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources: There are few streams and only one small wetland in the area and that avoidance should be considered with respect to that wetland.

Comment: Albert Richardson of the Detroit Fire Department: Concerned about traffic patterns.

Question: Unidentified speaker: What code would be used for the design of roads and what would be done to ensure proper use of the truck-only road?

Response: Within railroad property, the railroad would build to their own design needs and would control the use of the truck-only road. Outside the railroad property, it is likely the perimeter road would be a city street and built to meet city standards. Other improvements outside the terminal would be the state's responsibility and designed to meet state standards. Terminal access would be focused on the Livernois and Wyoming areas in such a way to encourage truck-only road use directly from those streets into the terminal. There may be a control device to limit areas to only DIFT vehicles.

Question: Harold Watkins of Detroit Environmental Management: Which railroads operate in the area? Will there be flow study of the numbers of trains and what they transport? Also, will there be access to the area for EMS?

Response: There will be a forecast of the number of trains. Emergency access will be addressed in the DEIS; roads built for the project must be accessible to emergency vehicles. The EIS will contain a plan to address spills of hazardous materials. And, the terminal's drainage system will be designed to contain runoff until it's appropriate to be released.

Comment: Mr. Gildon of the Detroit Fire Department: Keep in mind that all roads everywhere should be accessible by all of our emergency apparatus. That's what the Fire Department is going to require.

Question: Mark Merkey of Wayne County Department of Public Services: How roads under the jurisdictions of Wayne County would be handled. Were Dix or Wyoming going to be rebuilt as part of the project if increased truck traffic deteriorates them?

Response: Some improvements to these roads may be part of the project where the roads directly serve the DIFT.

Comment: Mr. Chbib of the Detroit Public School Systems: The truck-only road close to Beard School should be switched to the far side of the railroad tracks and that the existing fence be replaced. Also, he asked how to further comment on this project?

Response: A wall of some sort was being considered along the rail property near the Beard School. People can communicate issues on the project via the project's Web site, by letter, or at public meetings.

Question: Unidentified speaker: Asked about the time frame was for submitting comments.

Response: Comments were being accepted throughout the EIS process.

Comment: Mr. Palombo of SEMCOG indicated his agency had reviewed the project purpose and need and stated that, from SEMCOG's regional perspective, particular concerns were air quality, noise and truck traffic.

Comment: Ms. Lile of Detroit Department of Environmental Affairs: The Detroit Department of Environmental Affairs will touch base with each City agency and compile a City response. It will be submitted at a later point in time.

Response: It would be helpful if you submit your comments as soon as you can.

Comment: Officer Chris Braymon, Dearborn Police Department: Concerned for public safety.

At this point, having received comments from the agencies invited to the scoping meeting, comments from the general public were invited.

Comment: Father Reilly of St. Anne's Church: Dumping this project on the City mashes its people.

Comment: Ms. Milberg, area resident and member of Southwest Detroit Business Association: The project is not going to be helpful to the economics of the neighborhood.

Question: Ms. Gruelle of Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision: Creating a consolidated hazardous spill plan is productive. Asks if long periods of truck vibration cause destruction of buildings? Cites the Beard School concerns and stresses air pollution's effects on asthma, cancer, and heart disease, particularly in this sensitive area of Southwest Detroit.

Response: A study will be undertaken to determine the effect of truck vibrations. Air quality studies will also be conducted. Both direct and indirect effects of the project will be measured in a number of categories.

- Comment: Unidentified speaker: The DIFT Project has to be considered in light of the Ambassador Bridge Project, the proposed Rail Truck Tunnel, an improved track connection that would facilitate AMTRAK use through the DIFT, and additional changes resulting from the breakup of Conrail.
- Comment: Unidentified speaker: The Arab community is not being considered a minority group and should be.
- Comment: Ms. Kavanaugh of Communities for a Better Rail Alternative: Our organization has offered an alternative that we should like fully evaluated in the EIS process. Our alternative has been mis-characterized in the past as the “No Action” alternative. Our alternative would provide for almost half of the forecasted demand.
- Comment: Ms. Savoie of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services indicated her group would submit written comments today. She indicated Ms. Gruelle’s comments cover concerns that are very strong in the community. Ms. Savoie cited a “glaring omission” of the Arab American Community’s presence in examining environmental justice issues in data that the DIFT project has presented to date. She noted the Arab-American community is not a federally recognized minority but is almost impossible to ignore in Michigan. She also indicated her organization believes MDOT is in violation of the NEPA Code, which requires full evaluation of all reasonable alternatives, including those that only partially meet the stated goal of the project, even those that are outside the scope of the agency’s authority and that are not within the context of the finding currently available. She also noted it is repugnant to consider only No Action and one alternative. Ms. Savoie stressed her organization will submit case law to support these issues.
- Response: The efforts of the DIFT Project Team to provide full information to the Arab Community were noted.
- Comment: Ms. Wendler of the Southwest Detroit Business Association: Her organization is concerned about the loss of 99 businesses in MDOT’s preferred alternative. She would like to know the number of jobs lost at these businesses along with the income tax loss. Urges the state not to respond to her concerns until it has the answers.
- Comment: Mr. Slovic: Notes he’s seen no information concerning projects already in the pipeline that will affect DIFT at the Livernois-Junction Yard. Cites as examples the Detroit River Terminal Project and the West Detroit Connector in MDOT’s current budget for a \$500,000 improvement.
- Response: The DIFT will account for other projects that are underway or planned.

Comment: Unidentified speaker: It is hard to analyze the No Action Alternative without the Federal Railroad Administration's position on the disposition of Conrail assets.

Comment: Ms. Milberg: Allen Park is far from Southwest Detroit and indicates, "those population figures of white folks in that community were added (the DIFT reports) to kind of bump up the totals so that it would reduce by percentages the number of minorities that would be affected."

Comment: Greg Warren: Indicates those who spoke from the area have very good concerns.

Comment: Ms. Rodriguez of Mexicantown Community Development Corporation: This is the only neighborhood in the entire City of Detroit that has had any significant growth in businesses and residents. Notes the upcoming construction of an international Welcome Center. Cites the reeling-effect of the construction of freeways in the late 1960s. Urges the need to work something out that is going to benefit everyone but, primarily, that doesn't destroy the neighborhood that many have worked so hard to reconstruct.

Comment: Mr. Christiansen of the Southwest Detroit Improvement Association, an area resident, and a City Planning Commissioner: Notes his very big disappointment at the number of community people in attendance and also business people or business representatives. Indicates honest answers on the proposed DIFT will require getting the word to some people that can give you some answers.

Response: This meeting is a process to gather together resource agencies. It's open to the public to allow further involvement to, at least observe and offer comments. There have been many more opportunities for the public to provide comments.

The meeting moved at 11:00 a.m. to a bus tour of the Livernois-Junction Yard area where the DIFT is proposed to be located.

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September 19, 2002; 9:00 a.m.
Latino Family Services

Attendance

Name	Representing	Address	City	Zip	Telephone	E-mail
Fatima Aidibi	Corp. Translation Svcs.	26966 Rochelle	Dtn. Hts.	48127	313.792.1327	CorporationTranslation@msn.com
Heida Alcock	CPC	202 CAYMC	Detroit	48226	224-3281	alcockh@cncl.ci.detroit.mi.us
Ken Anderson	SDBA		Detroit			kenz@umich.edu
Jamie Antonini	USDA-NRCS	446 N. Elizabeth	Marin City			
Gerri Ayers	MDOT/ENV	425 W. Ottawa	Lansing	48909	517.335.2635	
Gabrielle Bagnasco	DCX	800 Chrysler Dr.	Auburn Hills	48326	248.576.8729	
Bryon Botts		4065 Lawndale	Detroit	48210	313.846.7292	
William Bowman	NRCS	3001 Coolidge Rd.	East Lansing	48911	517.324.5241	
Chris Braymon	City of Dearborn	16099 Michigan	Dearborn	48126	313.943.2294	
Mahmoud Chbib	Det. Pub. Sch.	5057 Woodward, Suite 564	Detroit	48202	313.494.1842	
Tom Christiansen	LPC	2754 Casper	Detroit	48209	313.842.7304	Tom1936@msn.com
Marty Connour	MARS Ind.	3100 Lonyo	Detroit	48209	313.841.1800	
Jeff Edwards	MDOT Metro Reg.	18101 W. 9 Mile	Southfield	48075	248-483-5114	edwardsje@michigan.govv
Doug Fishell	MDOT Real Estate		Lansing		517.373.2210	
Claryce Gibbons-Allen	DDOT	1301 E. Warren	Detroit	48207	833.7670	
Weylin Gildon	Fire Dept.	250 W. Larned	Detroit	48226	596-2907	
Greg Gorno	GTSJ/DIA	18673 Dix	B'town	48192	734.281.1666	greg@cornotrans
Chris Gulock	City Planning	202 Coleman A Young Ctr.	Detroit	48226	313.224.7888	
Alan Hayner	City of Detroit	65 Cad Tower	Detroit	48226	224.9033	ahayner@pdd.ci.det.mi.us
Robert Hedges	City of Dearborn	13015 Michigan	Dearborn	48126	313.943.2035	
Marc Higginbotham	Norfolk Southern	2000 Town Center, Ste. 1900	Southfield	48075	248.351.2670	
Frank Jackson	House Dem. Leader	3011 W. Grand Blvd, Ste. 1070	Detroit	48202	313.871.6985	redjax@aol.com
John James	JGI	4001 Fort St.	Detroit	48209	841.0070	
Reg Johnson	Det. Law	1650 First Nat'l	Detroit	48226	313.237.5065	
Jeff Jones	Det. Law	1650 First Nat'l	Detroit	48226	313.237.5065	
Frank Katarzis	City of Dearborn E&LD	13615 Michigan	Dearborn	48126	313.943.2180	fkatarzi@ci.dearborn.mi.us
K. Kavanaugh	SDBA	7752 W. Vernor	Detroit	48210	842.0986	
Bruce M. King	City of Detroit	660 Woodward	Detroit		313.471.5103	kingbm@env.afrs.ci.detroit.mi.us
Gay Lynn Kinter	NRCS	1525 N. Elms	Flint	45032	810.230.5766	
Sarah Lile	City of Detroit	1800 First Nat. Bldg.	Detroit	48226	313.471.5115	

Name	Representing	Address	City	Zip	Telephone	E-mail
Mark Merkey	Wayne County DPS	415 Clifford	Detroit		313.224.7272	mmerkey@co.wayne.mi.us
Kathy Milberg	Resident/SDBA	9152 Chamberlain	Detroit	48209	313.554.1850	
Carmine Palombo	SEMCOG					
Bob Parsons	MDOT		Lansing		517.335.2488	parsonsb@michigan.gov
Sherry Piacenti	MDOT	7050 W. Saginaw	Lansing	48917	517.321.5071	piacentis@michigan.gov
Joe Redican	LAC	5668 Baber	Detroit	48206	313.844.4443	joseredica@hotmail.com
Rev. A. Leo Reilly	St. Anne Parish	1000 St. Anne	Detroit	48216	964.5766	
Albert Richardson	D.F.D.	250 W. Larned	Detroit	48226	313.596.2922	
Jim Roach	AVT	991 Rosewood	E. Lansing	48823	517.351.8927	
Alex Romero	WC Sheriff	1231 St. Antoine	Detroit	48226	224.7103	aromero@co.wayne.mi.us
Alex Sanchez	DEQ	525 W. Allegan	Lansing	48909	517.335.3473	
Kathryn Savoie	ACCESS	6450 Maple St.	Dearborn	48126	313.554.0376	ksavoie@accesscommunity.org
Chuck Scott	Scott Cont. Service	POBox 10008	Detroit	48210	313.849.4553	chuckscott@scottcontainer.com
Chris Singer	Det. News				224.2127	
Paul Slaun	Scott Container	POBox 10008	Detroit	48210	313.523.9124	
Donald-Ray Smith	Detroit Planning	65 Cadillac, Suite 1300	Detroit	48226	313.224.1319	drsmith@pdl.ci.detroit.mi.us
Linda Vertin	City of Detroit	7140 W. Fort	Detroit	48210	596.5420	LLUL82@aol.com
Greg Warren						
Harold Watkins	Det. Env. Mgt.	250 W. Larned	Detroit	48226	313.596.5195	watkinsharold@dfdhg.ci.detroit.mi.us
K. Wendler	SDBA	7752 W. Vernor	Detroit	48209	842.0986	wendlerk@june.com
Marja Winters	Det. Plng. Comm.	202 CAYMC	Detroit	48226	313.224.6376	wintersm@cnci.ci.detroit.mi.us
Andy Zeigler	MDOT	18101 W. Nine Mile	Southfield	48075	248.483.5108	zeiglera@michigan.gov
Mona _____	MCDC	2620 _____	Detroit	48216	967.9898	

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